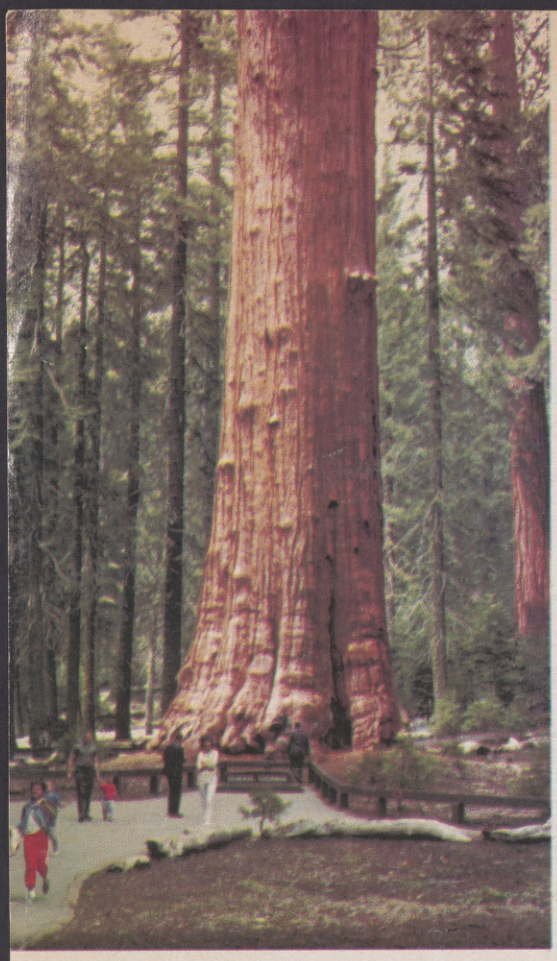


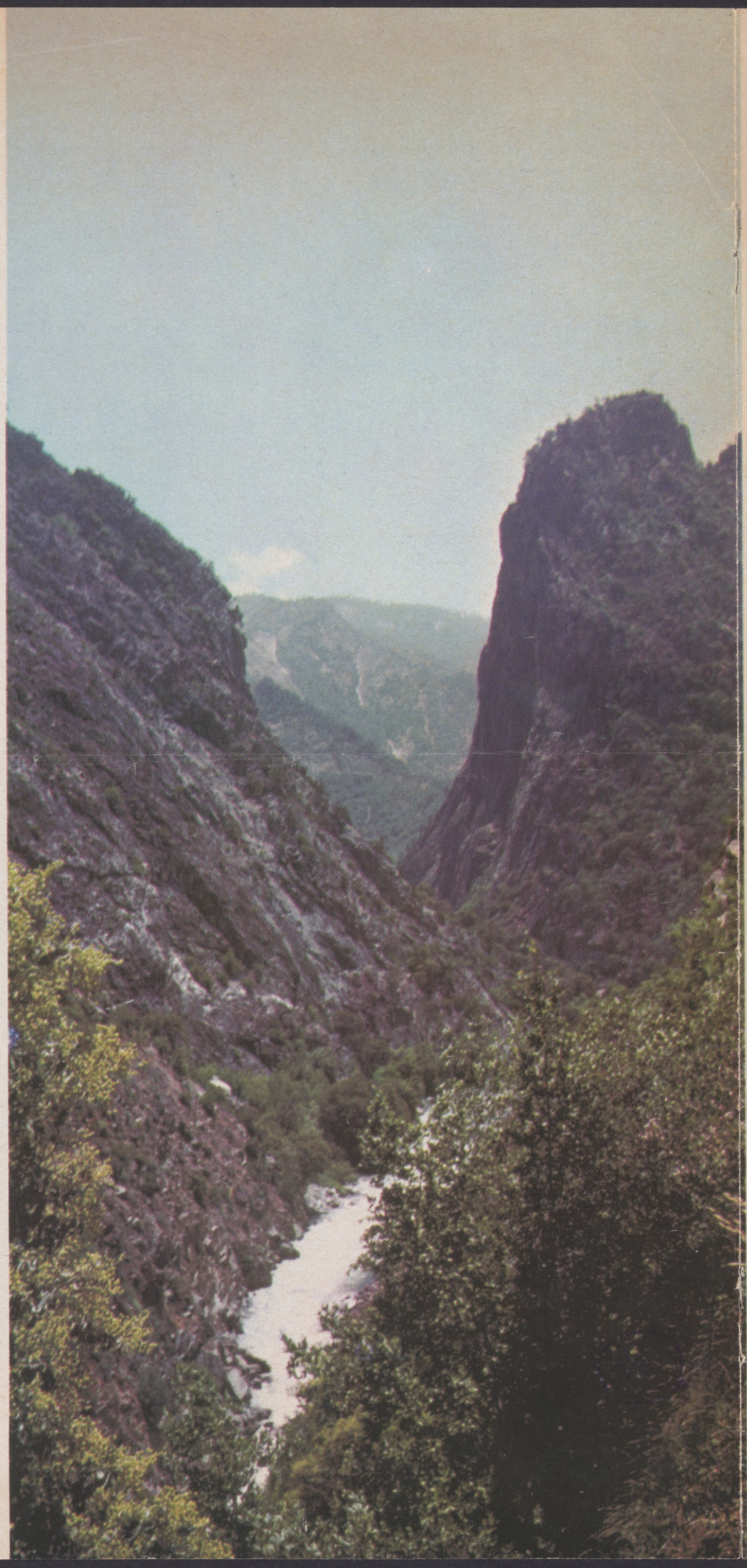
The General Sherman Tree, world's largest living thing, is 3,500 to 4,000 years old.

Deer are tame and plentiful. Friendly one below was photographed easily at Lost Grove.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

This giant sequoia, called the Tunnel Log, has straddled Giant Forest road since 1917.

From high up or down low, the powerful snow-fed Kings River commands respect.



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One gains a new perspective in this land of the Big Trees. View is of the famed Parker Group.

SEQUOIA-KINGS CANYON: Beauty Wild and Winning

BY HARRY COULTER

GIANT trees that were old when Christ was born . . . 11,000-foot peaks carved by glaciers in the dawn of history . . . rivers roaring down steep-walled canyons in a roiling rage of brute power . . . clear alpine lakes, tumbling waterfalls, flowered meadows, great caves.

These are some of the wonders awaiting the visitor to Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks in the High Sierra east of Fresno and Visalia. Here, in a 1,314-square-mile wilderness area only about 4½ hours' driving time from Los Angeles, is nature on the grand scale.

It was the presence of the *sequoia gigantea* "big trees"—the world's biggest living things—that prompted the formation of the two national parks, which are side by side and jointly administered.

Connecting the two parks is the 47-mile Generals Highway, which extends from State 198 at Ash Mountain, through Giant Forest to State 180 at Grant Grove.

The "big trees" are BIG, all right! Near Giant Forest are trees you can drive through (Tunnel Log), drive on (Auto Log) and live in (Tharp's Log). There are even a couple you can salute (General Sherman and General Lee).

Granddaddy of them all is the General Sherman Tree, reputedly the biggest living thing in the world. It is estimated at 3,500-4,000 years old and the circumference at its base is 101.6 feet. Height: 272.4 feet.

Let's take a quick look at each park.

SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK

One of the first points of interest is Hospital Rock, five miles beyond the Ash Mountain entrance. Here are ancient Indian pictographs.

A few miles farther, reached via a winding road, is the Giant Forest area with the big trees mentioned earlier.

Nearby is Moro Rock, with its magnificent views—the Great Western Divide on one side and the Kaweah River Valley on the other.

Another point of interest is Crystal Cave. Drive two miles southeast from Giant Forest Village, then seven miles north to the parking area. A scenic trail leads downward a half mile to the cave entrance. The cave is open daily, 9 A.M.-3 P.M., mid-June to early September. There are guided tours.

Ranger naturalists provide conducted walks to points of interest and there are evening campfire programs.

(Continued on page 16)

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